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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/813,828	03/31/2004	Alfred Tondreau	DMF-227-B	5069

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EXAMINER

CECIL, TERRY K

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1723

DATE MAILED: 09/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/813,828

Applicant(s)

TONDREAU ET AL.

Examiner

Mr. Terry K. Cecil

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 3-31-2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to because of the following:
 - They fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference signs mentioned in the description: “21”, “26”, “36” (page 4); “40”, “42”, “44”, which should be “38” (page 5); and “34” which should be “24” (pages 9 and 10).

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

2. Claim 2 is objected to because in line 2, word(s) are missing after “filter element”, e.g. “being”.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 5-6, 8-9, 15-16 and 18-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claims are indefinite because of the following reasons:

- For claims 5-6 and 8-9 it is unclear if “substantially” is meant to describe only the first end point of the range or both ends of the range. It is also unclear if applicant equates “substantially” with “about” or “approximately”.
- For claims 15-16 and 18-19 it is unclear if “approximately” is meant to describe only the first end point of the range or both ends of the range.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

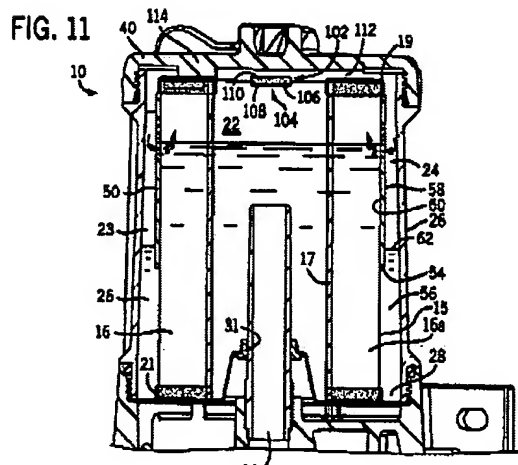
(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

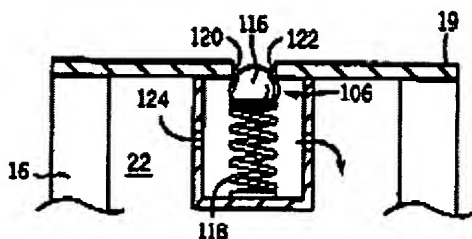
(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 1-2, 4, 11-12 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Prater et al. (U.S. 6,641,742).



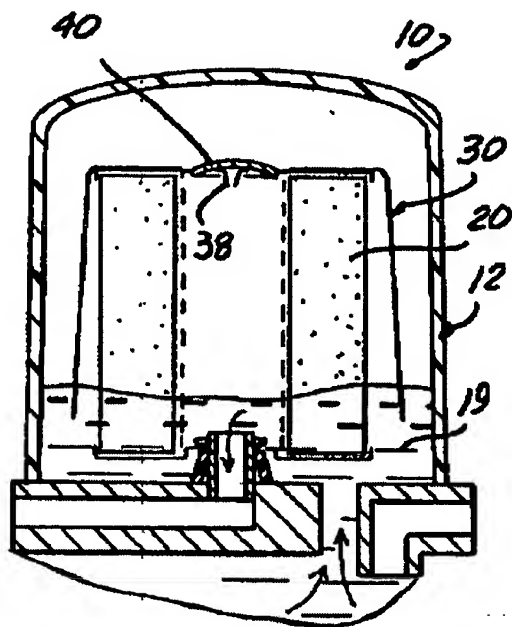
Prater discloses a filter apparatus for filtering diesel fuel [as in claims 4 and 14] including a transparent outer housing 26, a filter element, a cover 50 covering the upper portion of the element a relief valve 102 in the top of the element, wherein the cover is completely impervious (col. 6, lines 64-65) [as in claim 1]. The volume of captured air is of course

governed by Boyles law. The apparatus is configured such that upon reaching a maximum differential pressure across the filter element, the relief valve opens, causing fluid level in the housing to rise, thereby indicating the condition of the filter [as in claims 11]. Also, the spacing between the housing and filter cover is less at an upper portion of the housing [as in claims 2 and 12].



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7. Claims 1, 4, 7, 11, 14 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Smith et al. (U.S. 6,841,065).



10 The present invention provides a fluid filter assembly that provides an accurate indication of the remaining usefulness of a filter element. The present invention provides a vertical, transparent housing having a fuel inlet for communicating fluid into the housing and a fluid outlet for communicating fluid downstream of said housing. A filter element is disposed within the housing between the fluid inlet and the fluid outlet for filtering the fluid. A means for maintaining and relieving a predetermined level of pressure across the filter element provides an accurate visual indicator as to whether the filter element needs replacement.

FIG. 2 shows a fluid filter assembly 10 of the present invention in its preferred form. The fluid filter assembly 10 is best suited for filtering and processing diesel fuel, but the fluid filter assembly 10 may also be utilized with other fluids, such as gasoline, oil, water, antifreeze, etc. The fluid

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

9. Claims 3 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Prater in view of Jiang et al. (U.S. 6,939,464 B1).

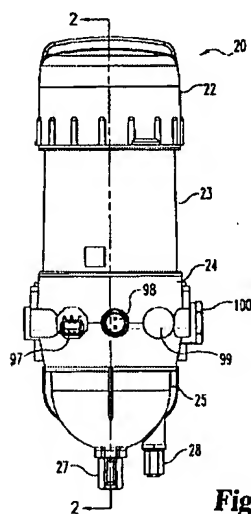


Fig. 1

Jiang teaches ribs on the outer surface of his housing cover [as in claims 3 and 13]. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one ordinarily skilled in the art at the time of the invention to such ribs on the outer housing surface of Prater since such would increase friction when producing a rotating motion to remove or replace the cover. The covers of both Prater and Jiang include threads.

10. Claims 10 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Prater in view of Robinson et al. (U.S. 6,039,030). These claims have the limitation of a thermocouple coupled to the relief valve. Robinson teaches a shape memory alloy thermocouple spring for affecting the control of a valve in response to temperature [as in claims and 20]. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one ordinarily skilled in the art at the time of the invention to have the spring of Robinson coupled to the relief valve of Prater, since such would prevent premature indication of a clogged filter when pressure temporarily increases because of higher viscosity of fluid flow.

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11. Claims 5-6, 8-9, 15-16 and 18-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Prater or Smith. These claims have limitations concerning pressure of the fluid the volume of air. It is pointed out that the pressure of the system affects the volume of air in the housing. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one ordinarily skilled in the art at the time of the invention that these values are a matter of optimization that depends upon the environment in which the apparatus will be used, e.g. flow rate, type of fluid to be filtered etc.

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12. Contact Information:

- Examiner Mr. Terry K. Cecil can be reached at (571) 272-1138 at the Carlisle campus in Alexandria, Virginia for any inquiries concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner. Note that the examiner is on the increased flextime schedule but can normally be found in the office during the hours of 8:30a to 4:30p, on at least four days during the week M-F.
- Wanda Walker, the examiner's supervisor, can be reached at (571) 272-1151 if attempts to reach the examiner are unsuccessful.
- The Fax number for this art unit for official faxes is (571) 273-8300.
- Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Mr. Terry K. Cecil
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1723

TKC
September 21, 2006